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Report of the Secretary-General on the indicators for monitoring the Millennium Development Goals

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report describes the work of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goals Indicators and the United Nations Statistics Division, in its capacity as coordinator of the group, undertaken in 2008, in the following areas: improvement of the coverage, transparency, and reporting on all indicators as presented in the database on all Millennium Development Goals; review of the data and indicators with a view to developing a monitoring mechanism that adequately monitors progress towards all goals and the implementation of all commitments; implementation of the recommendations contained in Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/6 on strengthening statistical capacity, adopted in July 2006, and those agreed by countries that are members of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group; and coordination of data gathering and compilation at the global level and preparation of the yearly analysis and progress reports on the Millennium Development Goals. The Commission is invited to comment on progress made by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goals Indicators and the United Nations Statistics Division and on the proposed steps and future directions of work.

* E/CN.3/2009/1.



I. Introduction

1. Since 2005, when the Statistical Commission, at its thirty-sixth session, expressed concerns regarding the ability of countries to produce the necessary data (not imputations by international agencies) and reviewed and discussed issues related to discrepancies and serious inconsistencies between national and international sources, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goals Indicators, and the United Nations Statistics Division, in its capacity of coordinator, have devoted increased attention to the improvement of data and reporting systems on the Millennium Development Goals. After 2006, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group also undertook specific steps to implement the recommendations of the Friends of the Chair on Millennium Development Goal indicators (see E/CN.3/2006/15) and those contained in Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/6 on strengthening statistical capacity.

2. Moreover, at its thirty-ninth session, the Commission requested the Inter-Agency and Expert Group to give greater consideration to the need for improving the capacity of countries to produce the indicators and develop specific recommendations in this regard and to submit them to the Statistical Commission at its fortieth session. Also, the Commission requested the Inter-Agency and Expert Group and all bodies involved to increase efforts to further improve the indicators of all Millennium Development Goals through methodological and technical refinements.¹

3. The present report outlines the progress made to address all concerns raised and details the activities undertaken for the improvement of Millennium Development Goal indicators and to improve capacity-building activities in countries for the production of the indicators. The report also describes the activities of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group and the United Nations Statistics Division to prepare the 2008 progress reports and related outputs on Millennium Development Goals to inform the public and policymakers on progress towards the goals. The annexes of the report contain an assessment of data availability in the Millennium Development Goal indicators database (annex I) and information on data availability in the database, by coverage and nature of data (annex II).

II. Improving data quality and transparency of methods

4. In November 2007, at its 12th session, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group agreed on a set of recommendations to improve coordination within national statistical systems and their reporting mechanisms to the international agencies, in an effort to reduce data gaps and data discrepancies between national and international sources. It also recommended that the United Nations Statistics Division should continue to carry out the survey on countries' coordination of statistical systems and reporting to the international agencies, and that countries' experiences in coordination and reporting mechanisms should be reviewed with a view to identifying best practices and developing guidelines for countries.

¹ *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2008, Supplement No. 4 (E/2008/24-E/CN.3/2008/34), chap. I.B, decision 39/114.*

5. The Inter-Agency and Expert Group also agreed that steps should be undertaken to reduce the gaps in data availability for both international and national monitoring and inconsistencies between the data available in national sources and used for national monitoring and the ones available in international data series and used for global monitoring. In this context, the United Nations Statistics Division engaged in a series of workshops to bring together representatives of national statistical systems and experts from international agencies tasked with the compilation of the international data series for Millennium Development Goal indicators, to review existing data gaps and differences between national and international data sets, identify the underlying causes and recommend appropriate actions to resolve these gaps and inconsistencies. The first of such events, held in May in Kampala, hosted by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics, brought together representatives from 16 national statistical offices and representatives from the Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Bank, some members of the academia and officers from other national governmental agencies and bilateral donors. The meeting agreed on a series of recommendations to improve Millennium Development Goals monitoring as described below.

6. On the functions of the national statistical offices, recommendations focused on strengthening the role of the national statistical offices as the coordinating body for the national statistical system and for verifying and validating data and data sources for the Millennium Development Goals. The group also recommended that national statistical offices should strengthen their role in providing technical support to line ministries and in the work with national authorities, in order to prioritize Millennium Development Goal indicators based on their relevance to national circumstances.

7. Participants also reviewed and made recommendations on ways to resolve discrepancies between national and international monitoring. In particular they recommended that: (a) countries should be involved in the development of concepts, definitions and methodology and in setting up guidelines for the production of Millennium Development Goal indicators, and national statisticians should be consulted before estimates are released; (b) international organizations should ensure that countries develop the capacity to make national definitions consistent with the international recommendations; and (c) national statistical offices should make efforts to harmonize definitions and classifications across the national statistical system, over time and between national and subnational data sets, and ensure that methodological development is consistent with the requirements for the production of Millennium Development Goal indicators.

8. Participants also agreed that, in order to ensure the availability of the necessary data, two key data collection tools needed to be strengthened: (a) civil registration and vital statistics systems were to be developed; and (b) the use of integrated household survey programmes was to be promoted.

9. Finally, to ensure that the necessary data are regularly produced by national statistical systems, the meeting recommended that adequate financial resources should be made available through basket funding and the improved effectiveness of aid delivery that would enable countries to prioritize their activities according to their national needs.

10. A programme similar to the one carried out for African countries is scheduled to be conducted in Bangkok, hosted by the Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), to address the needs of countries in Asia and the Pacific. National statisticians and representatives of line ministries are participating from over 20 countries. Experts from several international agencies are expected to participate to review metadata and national sources, review and discuss estimates and their methodology, and identify best practices for subnational monitoring.

11. With the main purpose of improving the collation, availability and dissemination of Millennium Development Goals data, the United Nations Statistics Division has also embarked on a new project, currently in its pilot phase. The project aims at achieving improvements in two areas: (a) understanding and reconciling discrepancies between country and international Millennium Development Goals data; and (b) strengthening the existing data-transfer mechanisms within country among the various data producers and between country data producers and international agencies. Desk research and country missions have already been conducted in four pilot countries, United Republic of Tanzania, Cambodia, Liberia and Bolivia, with a fifth country mission to be undertaken to Morocco in January 2009. The project is expected to be scaled up to cover a larger number of countries in the next three to five years.

A. Activities of Inter-Agency and Expert Group members for the improvement of data for Millennium Development Goal indicators

12. All Inter-Agency and Expert Group members have embarked on activities to improve the availability and quality of data for Millennium Development Goal indicators. This work has generally focused on improving access to the metadata and guidelines for the production of Millennium Development Goal indicators and providing training tools and programmes to national statisticians. The following are a few examples of what has been done during the last year.

13. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU), within the framework of the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development, has assisted national statistical offices in collecting data on access to and use of information and communications technologies (ICTs) by households and individuals. ITU is also currently finalizing a Statistical Manual to guide national statistical offices in carrying out household and individual surveys to collect ICT data. A first edition of this Manual is expected to be available in early 2009.

14. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has regularly conducted country and regional training to build capacity in the production of food security statistics, including Millennium Development Goal indicator 1.9 on food deprivation. In 2008, the last of a series of regional training workshops covering all regions was held in San José, Costa Rica, for countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Capacity-building activities are also conducted at the country level as part of technical assistance project with financial support from bilateral and multilateral donors, including, for example: in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Georgia, Haiti, Kenya, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malawi, the Republic of Moldova, Mozambique, Palestine and the Philippines, among others.

15. Regular consultation with countries are conducted by the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) to inform countries on how national figures are adjusted and disseminated by UIS (including on the underlying data used for the calculation of the indicators). This practice has proved successful in reducing misunderstandings concerning differences between national and international data. UIS also regularly conducts regional workshops. In 2008, UIS organized a regional workshop for Central and Western Africa, in collaboration with Paris21, the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century. Another regional workshop was conducted in Bangkok for South Asia, South-East Asia and the Pacific. In the first week of December 2008, UIS conducted a regional workshop in Paris for Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

16. In order to build national capacity for effective monitoring, the World Health Organization (WHO)/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme on water supply and sanitation — the official United Nations mechanism for monitoring progress towards Goal 7c — has organized a series of inter-country workshops in different regions. The aim of these workshops is (a) to enhance mutual understanding of monitoring methods used by countries and by the Programme, and (b) to achieve better understanding of the range of data needs and uses by different stakeholders. Since 2007, workshops have been held in Abuja and Nairobi for Anglophone countries in West and East Africa, and in Kathmandu for South-East Asian countries. Two further workshops were held in Panama for Central American countries in November 2008 and one in Mali for francophone African countries in December 2008. Where possible, the Joint Monitoring Programme follows these inter-country workshops with national seminars, with the aim of starting a national process bringing together representatives of the national statistical office and the water and sanitation sector to strengthen coordination of all stakeholders.

17. In 2008, the Geneva Millennium Development Goal-Trade group (International Trade Centre/United Nations Conference on Trade and Development/World Trade Organization) has updated the Millennium Development Goal-Trade website and included a revised version of the metadata and methodological notes in a continuous effort to provide tools for the production and use of trade indicators. While the work on supplementary indicators is still in progress, two indicators have already been published.

18. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has continued to give priority to technical cooperation activities, advisory services and training which (a) improve the quality of labour statistics derived from various sources, especially from labour force surveys, establishment surveys and censuses, and (b) enhance the harmonization and comparability of indicators. It has also provided technical assistance to a number of national statistical offices in the design of survey questionnaires to capture information on various labour concepts defined by the International Conferences of Labour Statisticians, on the survey and sample designs (including sample rotation schemes), and on the analysis of data from labour force surveys and other sources.

B. Implementation of the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange for data and metadata exchange within the Inter-Agency and Expert Group

19. The Inter-Agency and Expert Group has devoted increased attention to ensure the achievement of the desired levels of consistency and transparency in reporting and presenting data and metadata for international monitoring. In this respect, the Group agreed that the adoption of the common platform for data exchange, the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX) would be a good technical solution to this issue. In 2007, the Group established a task team on SDMX, with the objective of developing the data structure for Millennium Development Goal indicators to be used in data and metadata exchange among agencies. The team has finalized the data structure for Millennium Development Goal indicators and created a registry to be maintained by the United Nations Statistics Division on Millennium Development Goal indicators that will be used by agencies for their regular data and metadata exchange on the indicators. A training session on the use of a SDMX-Millennium Development Goals Registry was organized for all interested members of the SDMX-Millennium Development Goals Task Team. The Task Team also agreed to hold a workshop before the upcoming Inter-Agency and Expert Group spring meeting in March 2009 for agencies to share experiences in the implementation of SDMX and provide training on the development and use of tools to those who have not yet been able to implement SDMX. The Task Team will present its work at the upcoming second SDMX Global Conference that will take place from 19 to 21 January 2009 in Paris.

20. Once the SDMX data structure for Millennium Development Goal indicators and the Registry are well established, the Task Team will include in the discussion a few experts from countries with a view to extending this platform to national statistical systems. Countries within the Inter-Agency and Expert Group will be the first ones to be involved in the initiative. An expert group meeting with representatives from national statistical systems will be held in the spring of 2009. Their involvement and inputs will be crucial to ensure the achievement of the ultimate objective of implementing SDMX, which is to facilitate data exchange across countries, within regions and subregions, and between national and international statistical systems.

C. Improvement of the metadata on Millennium Development Goal indicators for global monitoring

21. All metadata for the Millennium Development Goal indicators series presented in the Millennium Development Goal indicators database were revised and edited, following the recommendations of country experts, members of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group and with inputs provided by all concerned international agencies. Currently, there are only seven series for which metadata were not provided, and four of these are series for which data are not available (series related to malaria, fish stocks, and access to essential drugs).

22. The Inter-Agency and Expert Group has also continued to work to help ensure that countries have access to the necessary tools to monitor the Millennium Development Goals at the national level. In particular, the Group has agreed to produce a revised version of the Handbook on Millennium Development Goal Indicators, which will also be available online in an interactive format. The new

manual will be better tailored to the specific country needs for monitoring, and will include practical examples. It will also cover all the new indicators being introduced after the first edition was issued and reflect the refinement in the definitions and methods for Millennium Development Goal indicators that occurred over the last few years. The first draft of the manual will be reviewed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group in spring 2009 and then discussed with country representatives at the Group's fall meeting. The draft will be first issued online only, to allow time for further review by users, and then printed at the beginning of 2010.

III. Review data and methodologies to monitor Millennium Development Goals

23. The Inter-Agency and Expert Group has initiated a review of issues related to the use of the indicators to assess progress in all areas covered by the Millennium Development Goals. In particular, countries and international agencies within the Group, and UNSD in its role as coordinator of the Group, have considered the following:

(a) The need to give greater consideration to the improvement of countries' capacity to produce the indicators and develop recommendations on ways to improve statistical capacity-building in countries;

(b) The need to develop tools to assess progress in the various goals and targets at the national level;

(c) The need for indicators to be disaggregated within countries to inform policies on Millennium Development Goals and related monitoring of progress at the subnational level;

(d) The need to supplement official indicators with some background series to better understand outcome in the various areas covered by the Millennium Development Goals;

(e) The need to better define concepts and definitions of existing indicators to improve their use at the national and international levels.

24. The Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goal Indicators, at its fourteenth session, held from 28 to 30 October 2008, focused on the issues listed above and produced the following major outcomes: reviewed the methodology and data used to produce the new poverty estimates; discussed ongoing projects to address the differences between national and international data and identified concrete steps to be undertaken by national statistical offices and international agencies to reduce these discrepancies; discussed strategies to improve the availability of reliable Millennium Development Goal data at the subnational level; discussed ways to improve the monitoring of Goal 8 at the national level; reviewed the proposed content and structure of the revised version of the Handbook on Millennium Development Goals Indicators and other tools for national monitoring.

25. With respect to the improvement of data availability at both the national and international levels and the reduction of the inconsistencies between national and international data, the meeting made a number of recommendations related to the establishment of a coordinating body within the country to facilitate the reporting to the international system and harmonize the use of metadata across the various national agencies. It also recommended that the new Handbook on Millennium

Development Goals Indicators be widely disseminated and used, especially through regional and national workshops, and that international agencies disseminated their metadata to national statistical offices.

26. In order to improve the availability of reliable subnational data, participants recommended to expand the use of administrative data, generate estimates at the subnational level with mapping techniques and combine different sources and use small area estimation techniques. It also agreed that it was important to engage local governments in the production of statistics and harmonize data systems at the subnational level. Finally, participants requested that the United Nations Statistics Division provide opportunities for training in this area and for sharing experiences with countries that have already conducted subnational analysis and monitoring.

27. In order to improve the national monitoring of Goal 8, the Group recommended strengthening country capacity to measure ICT, including preparing a technical manual and assisting countries in conducting ICT surveys or in the inclusion of ICT questions in ongoing surveys. It also recommended clarifying the definition of the indicator on access to drugs and strengthening national service delivery surveys, including the monitoring of access to drugs. The Group also reviewed the work by the International Trade Centre in trying to find better indicators to estimate trade development and its impact. Finally, it was stressed that at the country level, all aid received by the country and ministries should be monitored, that national statistical offices should pay more attention to the production of debt and other financial statistics, and that the statistical capacity of the ministries of finance should be strengthened.

28. The Group agreed on the way forward for both international agencies and national statistical offices as follows:

(a) Continuing the work to reconcile the national and international monitoring and to identify best strategies to strengthen countries' capacity for monitoring development;

(b) Strengthening training tools available to countries, including the wide distribution of the new manual and the provision of training services;

(c) Providing specific training on subnational analysis and monitoring to allow countries to localize the Millennium Development Goals;

(d) Assessing the feasibility of expanding the survey normally extended to the Inter-Agency and Expert Group countries only, on reporting modalities, coordination and other issues relevant to national and international monitoring;

(e) Reviewing database platforms used by countries as central repository for national indicators with a view to streamlining and avoiding using multiple data systems;

(f) Assessing the feasibility of extending the use of SDMX to countries who wish to adopt it.

29. The Inter-Agency and Expert Group has also continued the review of methodologies for the production of Millennium Development Goal indicators and has addressed important methodological issues. One such issue relates to the use of population figures in the computation of the indicators and in the aggregation of national values to regional and global figures.

IV. Assessment of data availability on Millennium Development Goal indicators

30. Since the periodic assessment of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals began over seven years ago, the capacity of countries to produce and use the necessary statistics for their national monitoring and to report to the international system for global monitoring has been a preoccupation of the statistical community. Since 2006, the United Nations Statistics Division has monitored the availability and nature of the data provided by the international agencies for the global monitoring, and contained in the Millennium Development Goal indicators database (<http://mdgs.un.org>). This assessment has served as a way to both determine to what extent the regional aggregates used for the global monitoring reflect the actual situation around the world, and on the other hand as an indirect measure of countries' capacity to produce the necessary data.

31. Over the years, international agencies, regional commissions and other development partners have engaged in a number of initiatives to help developing countries to strengthen their statistical capacity to produce, analyse and disseminate data to monitor development. These activities, especially the increased dialogue between countries and international agencies within the Inter-Agency and Expert Group and in the various forums aimed at addressing countries' needs to improve national coordination and a better understanding of Millennium Development Goal metadata, have improved the availability of data for the monitoring of progress on the Goals. Table 1 presents the current status with regard to the availability of data to allow the assessment of trends, measured as the number of countries that have data before and after the year 2000 (at least one data point).² For more than half of the developing countries, the database contains trend data for 30 indicators or more, and almost a fourth of the countries have trend data for more than 40 indicators. On the other hand, just 11 countries have trend data for 10 indicators or less.

Table 1
Number of developing countries and territories in the Millennium Development Goal indicator database, by number of indicators for which trend analysis is possible^a

<i>Number of indicators for which trend analysis is possible</i>	<i>Number of countries</i>	<i>Percentage of countries</i>
0-10	11	7
11-20	19	12
21-30	43	26
31-40	51	31
41-55	39	24
Total	163	100

^a The criteria used to determine whether trend analysis is possible for a given indicator is that the country has data for the given indicator for at least one point before 2000 and one after 2000.

² A brief description of the methodology for the assessment of data availability in the Millennium Development Goal indicators database is presented as annex I. The complete results of the analysis are available on the website of the Statistical Commission at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/sc2009.htm>.

32. There has certainly been improvement in data availability over the last few years. Table 2 shows changes in the availability of data for two points in time, between November 2005 and July 2008. In 2005, only one developing country had data for two points in time for more than 30 indicators. In July 2008, that number had reached 70. At the same time, the number of countries with trend data for only 0-10 indicators had decreased to about one third of what it was in 2005 — from 29 countries to 11.

Table 2

Number of developing countries and territories by number of indicators with at least two data points^a

Number of indicators with at least two data points	Number of countries with data in the Millennium Development Goal indicators database			
	As of November 2005		As of July 2008	
	Number of countries	Percentage of countries	Number of countries	Percentage of countries
0-10	29	18	11	7
11-20	52	32	22	13
21-30	81	50	60	37
31-39	1	1	70	43
Total	163	100	163	100

^a To allow comparison with the database in 2005, the two points in time considered in this table refer to any time, irrespective of whether it is before or after 2000.

33. Still, gaps remain in the availability and quality of data needed to effectively monitor progress in development and in particular in the Millennium Development Goals. This is particularly evident when the nature of the data contained in the database is analysed.

34. As agreed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group in 2006, for each data point of the data series presented in the database (for every country and every year considered), the responsible agency provides the explanation of how the figures are obtained, in relation to the level of adjustment of the original country data the agency performs to obtain the desired level of international comparability or to resolve data quality issues. Country representatives and international agencies in the Inter-Agency and Expert Group agreed on the categories to be used to describe the nature of the data, as detailed in table 3 below. The assessment shown in the table indicates the nature of the data for the majority of countries in the database: an indicator is defined as being of a given category when the majority of the countries have data falling into that category. For a country to be designated as falling into a given category for the specific indicators, the majority of data points have to be in that category.³

³ The category "country data" is an exception: when the country has data in the "country data" category for at least one data point, it is classified as "country data" for that specific indicator, following the rationale that in that case the country has the capacity to produce the indicator in adherence to international standards.

35. The majority of indicators are based on data from countries with no or minimum adjustment. There are, however, still 12 indicators for which the majority of data points need to be estimated by the international agency and 3 for which the availability of data is so scarce that most data points are derived through a model based on variables other than the one the indicator is measuring. The latter is the case, for instance, of the maternal mortality ratio, for which the necessary data — from complete civil registration and good attribution of causes of death — are rarely available in developing countries. A complete list of indicators under each category and related data availability is presented in annex II.

Table 3
Millennium Development Goal indicators by nature of the data available in the majority of countries^a

<i>Nature of data</i>	<i>Millennium Development Goal indicators</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Country data	27	49
Country adjusted	4	7
Estimated	12	22
Modelled	3	5
Global monitoring data	6	11
Not available	3	5
Total	55	100

^a The coding of the nature of the data is as follows:

C = country data. The figure is the one produced and disseminated by the country (including data adjusted by the country to meet international standards).

CA = country adjusted. The figure is the one produced and provided by the country, but adjusted by the international agency for international comparability — that is to comply with internationally agreed standards, definitions and classifications (age group, International Standard Classification of Education, etc.).

E = estimated. The figure is estimated by the international agency, when corresponding country data on a specific year or set of years are not available, or when multiple sources exist, or there are issues of data quality. Estimates are based on national data, such as surveys or administrative records, or other sources but on the same variable being estimated.

M = modelled. The figure is modelled by the agency when there is a complete lack of data on the variable being estimated. The model is based on a set of covariates — other variables for which data are available and that can explain the phenomenon.

G = global monitoring data. The figure is regularly produced by the designated agency for the global monitoring, based on country data. However, there is no corresponding figure at the country level, because the indicator is defined for international monitoring only (example: population below \$1 a day).

NA = not available. The nature of the data is unknown or was not provided.

36. Another important aspect in the availability of data for Millennium Development Goal monitoring is that the latest data point should be recent enough to allow an assessment of progress after the Millennium Declaration was adopted and the new development policies and initiatives were implemented. Recent data are also indispensable to understand how far countries are from achieving the Millennium Development Goals, what resources are needed and what interventions

need to be put in place. From the analysis of the data contained in the Millennium Development Goals indicators database, as shown in table 4, it appears that the latest year for the large majority of indicators is 2005 or a later year. Encouragingly, for none of the indicators is the most recent year earlier than 2000. Although the coverage of recent years is good, there is not sufficient information over the last year or two to understand the impact of recent development initiatives or assess the effect of crises such as the recent increases in food prices, whose effect on the number of poor and on many other areas of the Millennium Development Goals will not be reflected in the data available for at least another year.

Table 4

Number of Indicators by latest available year in the Millennium Development Goal indicators database

<i>Latest available years for the majority of countries</i>	<i>Number of indicators</i>	<i>Percentage of indicators</i>
1990-1999	0	0
2000-2004	13	24
2005-2007	41	75
2008	1	2
Total	55	100

V. Understanding and resolving the differences between country data and international data series

37. More and better data have become available to monitor the Millennium Development Goals. Over the last two years, the United Nations Statistics Division, the regional commissions and the other member agencies of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group have intensified their work to improve the use of national data through the promotion of better coordination within national statistical systems, better use of internationally agreed standards by countries, and better reporting mechanisms from national agencies to the international statistical system. However, official national data remains underutilized and differences of indicator values between national and international sources remain evident for almost all indicators.

38. The United Nations regional commissions have recently carried out a comprehensive assessment of the differences in data availability and values between national and international sources. Major factors to which differences in values are attributable include:

(a) The definition and/or method of calculation in the country does not comply with the international standards used for the production of international data. As an illustration of this case, in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia region, the indicator "Proportion of 1-year-old children immunized against measles" is the "*The proportion of 1-year-old children (12-23 months) immunized against measles is the percentage of children under one year of age who have received at least one dose of measles vaccine*" was in some countries defined as "*Vaccination through injection given once at nine months of age to protect against measles*". And the indicator "Condom use rate of the contraceptive

prevalence rate", which is defined as *"The number of women aged 15-49 years in marital or consensual unions who are practicing contraception by using condoms as a proportion of all of women of the same age group in consensual unions who are practicing, or whose sexual partners are practicing, any form of contraception"* was computed nationally by some countries using as denominator only *"the total number of women aged 15-49 who are practicing any form of contraception"*. The assessment conducted by ESCAP also reveals differences between national and international definitions. For instance, countries in the region often use their own definition of an improved water source or improved sanitation facility, which may be substantially different from the international definition and lead to very different values;

(b) International values are estimates produced by agencies. When data from countries are available from different sources and/or there are quality issues to be resolved, international figures produced by agencies are fitted values of regression lines based on all available data sources, generally including administrative records, census and survey data. On the other hand, national figures usually are derived from one specific data source only;

(c) Use of different population figures. This is the case for instance of education indicators. Besides adjustments needed to make up for differences in different educational classification systems and allow international comparability, the computation of these indicators require the use of population figures, which for international agencies are derived from the Population Division of the Secretariat estimates, while in countries are often national estimates.

39. Very similar findings resulted from the assessment conducted for Latin America and the Caribbean by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and for European and Central Asian countries by the Economic Commission for Europe. Also the same results were obtained through the case studies undertaken within the recently initiated United Nations Statistics Division project (see para. 10 above) in the first two pilot countries — United Republic of Tanzania and Cambodia — and from the assessment of data discrepancies carried out at the workshop for the 16 African countries held in Uganda in May 2008 (see para. 5 above).

40. Many of the differences identified are well understood and acceptable, since a certain degree of adjustment will always be necessary if data are to be compared across countries and aggregated to produce global and regional figures necessary for the assessment of global Millennium Development Goal trends. Also, figures used for national monitoring and to inform the national policies and interventions legitimately need to be different when indicators are defined in a different way from the international standards to suit national specific needs and circumstances. In all other cases, the United Nations Statistics Division, regional commissions and all other agencies will continue the work initiated two years ago to assist countries in achieving a more efficient reporting to the international system and in fostering a dialogue and collaboration between international and national data producers.

VI. Outputs by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group in 2008

41. Based on the inputs provided by the various responsible agencies, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat published *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2008*. The report was launched in September

2008 by the Secretary-General and used to inform the political debate of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals and as an official document for the High-Level Event on the Millennium Development Goals, held in New York on 25 September. The report was translated into all the official languages and also launched at regional and subregional events in various countries around the world.

42. The assessment of progress based on regional aggregates was also presented in the Millennium Development Goals: 2008 Progress Chart. The colour-coded chart, produced for the fifth consecutive year, presents an assessment of regional trends and indicates regions and subregions that are on- or off-track to achieve the goals. In addition, a progress chart was produced presenting countries within each region according to their degree of progress towards the achievement of the Goals. The assessment is based on statistics from 1990 until the latest year for which data are available. A progress report was also prepared on progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women in the developing regions. The report covers the gender dimensions of all eight development Goals.

43. The United Nations Statistics Division also prepared data and analysis to inform the 2008 report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on the work of the organization and the statistical annex that was presented as an annex to the report.⁴ The Division has also continued to maintain the website and database of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goals indicators (<http://mdgs.un.org>).

44. In September 2008, the Statistics Division, in collaboration with the DevInfo group issued the fourth edition of MDGInfo, an off-line version of the database, using the DevInfo platform, a technology specifically designed to support Governments in Millennium Development Goal monitoring. MDGInfo is intended to facilitate the access to the database and the Millennium Development Goal Report to users with limited access to internet.

VII. Conclusions and way forward

45. The Commission may wish to take note of the work done by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group and the United Nations Statistics Division during 2008 in implementing the recommendations contained in Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/6 and the requests made by the Statistical Commission at its thirty-ninth session, on the improvement of data and indicators to monitor the Millennium Development Goals.

46. The Commission may also wish to comment on the proposed next steps:

(a) Continuing the work to reconcile the national and international monitoring, focusing in particular on the development of recommendations and guidelines for countries to improve their national coordination and reporting systems;

(b) Strengthening training tools available to countries, including the wide distribution of the new Handbook on Millennium Development Goal Indicators and the regular provision of training services;

(c) Providing specific training on subnational analysis and monitoring to allow countries to better localize the Millennium Development Goals.

⁴ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-third Session, Supplement No. 1 (A/63/1).*

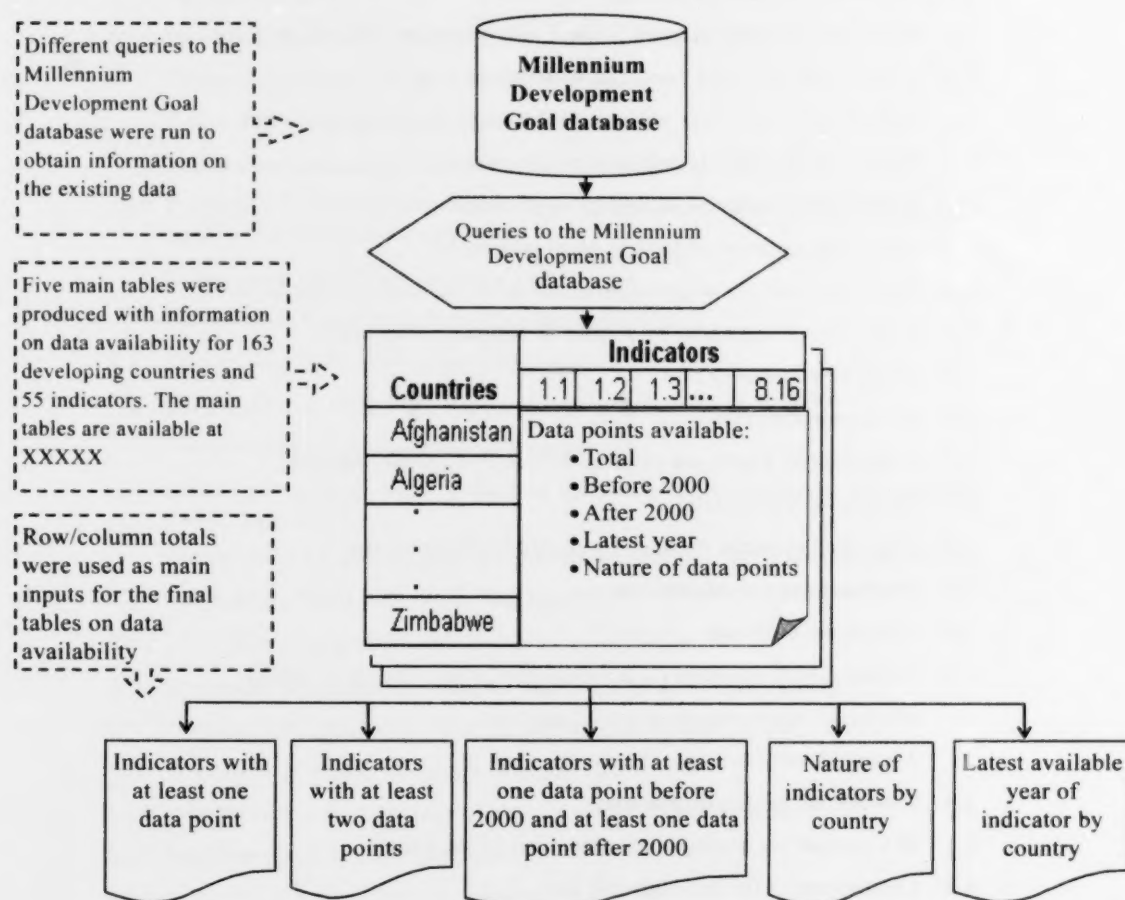
Annex I

Assessment of data availability in the Millennium Development Goal indicators database

A total of 55 indicators were included in the analysis of data availability (see list A below). The analysis considered all 163 developing countries included in the database (see [http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Host.aspx?Content=Data/Regional Groupings.htm](http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Host.aspx?Content=Data/Regional%20Groupings.htm) for a list of developing countries). The comparison between data available in 2005 and 2008 was carried out considering 39 indicators out of the 55.

The analysis is based on the information available at the time the MDG Indicators Database was last updated — July 2008. The only exception is represented by indicators 1.1 Proportion of population below \$1 purchasing parity power (PPP) per day, and 1.2 Poverty gap ratio, which were updated in November 2008.

The following chart describes the steps followed to process the information:



List A. Millennium Development Goal indicators included in data availability analysis

- 1.1 Proportion of population below \$1 (PPP) per day
- 1.2 Poverty gap ratio
- 1.3 Share of poorest quintile in national consumption
- 1.4 Growth rate of gross domestic product (GDP) per person employed
- 1.5 Employment-to-population ratio
- 1.6 Proportion of employed people living below \$1 (PPP) per day
- 1.7 Proportion of own-account and contributing family workers in total employment
- 1.8 Prevalence of underweight children under five years of age
- 1.9 Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption
- 2.1 Net enrolment ratio in primary education
- 2.2 Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach last grade of primary
- 2.3 Literacy rate of 15-24 year olds, women and men
- 3.1 Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education
 - Gender Parity Index in primary-level enrolment
 - Gender Parity Index in secondary-level enrolment
 - Gender Parity Index in tertiary-level enrolment
- 3.2 Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector
- 3.3 Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament
- 4.1 Under-five mortality rate
- 4.2 Infant mortality rate
- 4.3 Proportion of 1-year-old children immunized against measles
- 5.1 Maternal mortality ratio
- 5.2 Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel
- 5.3 Contraceptive prevalence rate
- 5.4 Adolescent birth rate
- 5.5 Antenatal care coverage (at least one visit and at least four visits)
 - Antenatal care coverage, at least four visits
 - Antenatal care coverage, at least one visit
- 5.6 Unmet need for family planning
- 6.1 HIV prevalence among population aged 15-24 years
- 6.2 Condom use at the last high-risk sex
 - Condom use at last high-risk sex, 15-24 years old, men

- Condom use at last high-risk sex, 15-24 years old, women
- Condom use to overall contraceptive use among currently married women 15-49 years old
- 6.3 Proportion of population aged 15-24 years with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS
- Men 15-24 years old with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS
- Women 15-24 years old with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS
- 6.4 Ratio of school attendance of orphans to school attendance of non-orphans aged 10-14 years
- 6.5 Proportion of population with advanced HIV infection with access to antiretroviral drugs
- 6.7 Proportion of children under 5 sleeping under insecticide-treated bednets
- 6.8 Proportion of children under 5 with fever who are treated with appropriate antimalarial drugs
- 6.9 Incidence, prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis
- Tuberculosis death rate per 100,000 population
- Tuberculosis incidence per 100,000 population
- Tuberculosis prevalence rate per 100,000 population
- 6.10 Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under directly observed treatment short course (DOTS)
- Tuberculosis detection rate under DOTS
- Tuberculosis treatment success rate under DOTS
- 7.1 Proportion of land area covered by forest
- 7.2 Carbon dioxide emissions, total, per capita and per \$1 GDP (PPP)
- 7.3 Consumption of ozone-depleting substances
- Consumption of all ozone-depleting substances in ozone depletion potential (ODP) metric tons
- Consumption of ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) in ODP metric tons
- 7.5 Proportion of total water resources used
- 7.6 Proportion of terrestrial and marine areas protected
- 7.8 Proportion of population using an improved drinking water source
- 7.9 Proportion of population using an improved sanitation facility
- 7.10 Proportion of urban population living in slums
- 8.12 Debt service as a percentage of exports of goods and services
- 8.14 Telephone lines per 100 population
- 8.15 Cellular subscribers per 100 population
- 8.16 Internet users per 100 population

Annex II

Data availability in the Millennium Development Goal indicators database, by coverage and nature of data

Millennium Development Goals indicator	Countries with at least 1 data point		Countries with at least 2 data points		Countries with at least 1 data point before 2000 and 1 data point after 2000		Nature of data ^a
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
C = country data							
1.7 Proportion of own-account and contributing family workers in total employment	77	47	57	35	47	29	C
1.8 Prevalence of underweight children under five years of age	116	71	94	58	84	52	C
2.1 Net enrolment ratio in primary education	139	85	124	76	109	67	C
2.2 Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach last grade of primary	124	76	103	63	91	56	C
2.3 Literacy rate of 15-24 year olds, women and men	119	73	101	62	74	45	C
3.1 Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education							
Gender Parity Index in primary-level enrolment	146	90	143	88	133	82	C
Gender Parity Index in secondary-level enrolment	146	90	140	86	127	78	C
Gender Parity Index in tertiary-level enrolment	124	76	115	71	89	55	C
3.2 Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector	154	94	97	60	72	44	C
3.3 Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament	134	82	134	82	126	77	C
5.3 Contraceptive prevalence rate	122	75	99	61	84	52	C
5.4 Adolescent birth rate	160	98	153	94	145	89	C
5.5 Antenatal care coverage (at least one visit and at least four visits)							
Antenatal care coverage, at least four visits	56	34	0	0	0	0	C
5.6 Unmet need for family planning	72	44	54	33	49	30	C
6.2 Condom use at the last high-risk sex							
Condom use at last high-risk sex, 15-24 years old, men	39	24	19	12	13	8	C
Condom use at last high-risk sex, 15-24 years old, women	49	30	23	14	14	9	C
Condom use to overall contraceptive use among currently married women 15-49 years old	120	74	95	58	81	50	C
6.3 Proportion of population aged 15-24 years with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS							
Men 15-24 years old with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS	38	23	9	6	1	1	C
Women 15-24 years old with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS	64	39	9	6	1	1	C
6.4 Ratio of school attendance of orphans to school attendance of non-orphans aged 10-14 years	58	36	34	21	24	15	C

Millennium Development Goals indicator	Countries with at least 1 data point		Countries with at least 2 data points		Countries with at least 1 data point before 2000 and 1 data point after 2000		Nature of data ^a
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
6.7 Proportion of children under 5 sleeping under insecticide-treated bednets	45	28	21	13	2	1	C
6.8 Proportion of children under 5 with fever who are treated with appropriate antimalarial drugs	48	29	24	15	5	3	C
7.3 Consumption of ozone-depleting substances							
Consumption of all ozone-depleting substances in ODP metric tons	136	83	136	83	136	83	C
Consumption of ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons in ODP metric tons	136	83	136	83	136	83	C
7.5 Proportion of total water resources used	117	72	58	36	56	34	C
7.1 Proportion of land area covered by forest	155	95	155	95	155	95	C
6.10 Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under directly observed treatment short course (DOTS)							
Tuberculosis treatment success rate under DOTS	146	90	145	89	130	80	C
CA = country adjusted							
5.2 Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel	140	86	124	76	105	64	CA
5.5 Antenatal care coverage (at least one visit and at least four visits)							
Antenatal care coverage, at least one visit	96	59	92	56	79	48	CA
6.5 Proportion of population with advanced HIV infection with access to antiretroviral drugs	90	55	89	55	0	0	CA
8.12 Debt service as a percentage of exports of goods and services	106	65	106	65	98	60	CA
E = estimated							
1.4 Growth rate of GDP per person employed	114	70	114	70	114	70	E
1.5 Employment-to-population ratio	125	77	125	77	125	77	E
4.1 Under-five mortality rate	138	85	138	85	138	85	E
4.2 Infant mortality rate	138	85	138	85	138	85	E
4.3 Proportion of 1-year-old children immunized against measles	139	85	139	85	136	83	E
6.1 HIV prevalence among population aged 15-24 years	101	62	101	62	0	0	E
6.9 Incidence, prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis							
Tuberculosis incidence per 100,000 population	154	94	154	94	154	94	E
7.6 Proportion of terrestrial and marine areas protected	156	96	156	96	154	94	E
7.8 Proportion of population using an improved drinking water source	142	87	142	87	137	84	E
7.9 Proportion of population using an improved sanitation facility	137	84	137	84	131	80	E
7.10 Proportion of urban population living in slums	108	66	105	64	105	64	E
6.10 Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under directly observed treatment short course (DOTS)							
Tuberculosis detection rate under DOTS	148	91	145	89	125	77	E

Millennium Development Goals indicator	Countries with at least 1 data point		Countries with at least 2 data points		Countries with at least 1 data point before 2000 and 1 data point after 2000		Nature of data ^a
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
M = modelled							
5.1 Maternal mortality ratio	120	74	0	0	0	0	M
6.9 Incidence, prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis							
Tuberculosis death rate per 100,000 population	154	94	154	94	154	94	M
Tuberculosis prevalence rate per 100,000 population	154	94	154	94	154	94	M
G = global monitoring data							
1.1 Proportion of population below \$1 (PPP) per day	89	55	68	42	67	41	G
1.2 Poverty gap ratio	89	55	68	42	67	41	G
1.3 Share of poorest quintile in national consumption	82	50	62	38	51	31	G
1.6 Proportion of employed people living below \$1 (PPP) per day	71	44	56	34	46	28	G
1.9 Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption	121	74	121	74	121	74	G
7.2 Carbon dioxide emissions, total, per capita and per \$1 GDP (PPP)	150	92	150	92	148	91	G
NA = not available							
8.14 Telephone lines per 100 population	156	96	156	96	155	95	NA
8.15 Cellular subscribers per 100 population	156	96	156	96	156	96	NA
8.16 Internet users per 100 population	156	96	152	93	149	91	NA

Abbreviations: CFCS = chlorofluorocarbons, GDP = gross domestic product, ODP = ozone depletion potential, PPP = purchasing power potential.

^a The coding of the nature of the data is as follows:

C = country data. The figure is the one produced and disseminated by the country (including data adjusted by the country to meet international standards).

CA = country adjusted. The figure is the one produced and provided by the country, but adjusted by the international agency for international comparability — that is to comply with internationally agreed standards, definitions and classifications (age group, International Standard Classification of Education, etc.).

E = estimated. The figure is estimated by the international agency, when corresponding country data on a specific year or set of years are not available, or when multiple sources exist, or there are issues of data quality. Estimates are based on national data, such as surveys or administrative records, or other sources but on the same variable being estimated.

M = modelled. The figure is modelled by the agency when there is a complete lack of data on the variable being estimated. The model is based on a set of covariates — other variables for which data are available and that can explain the phenomenon.

G = global monitoring data. The figure is regularly produced by the designated agency for the global monitoring, based on country data. However, there is no corresponding figure at the country level, because the indicator is defined for international monitoring only (example: population below \$1 a day).

NA = not available. The nature of the data is unknown or was not provided.



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Statistical Commission

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Item 4 (a) of the provisional agenda*

Items for information: population and housing censuses

Population and housing censuses

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted to the Statistical Commission in accordance with a request of the Commission at its thirty-ninth session (see E/2008/24). It contains information about activities completed in respect of the implementation of the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses in general, including the conduct of an expert group meeting and training workshops; the dissemination of the second revision of the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses*; the development of a website to serve as a census knowledge base; and the development of a software package, CensusInfo, to help countries disseminate census data. It also contains information on future activities related to the 2010 World Programme. The Commission is requested to take note of the report.

* E/CN.3/2009/1.



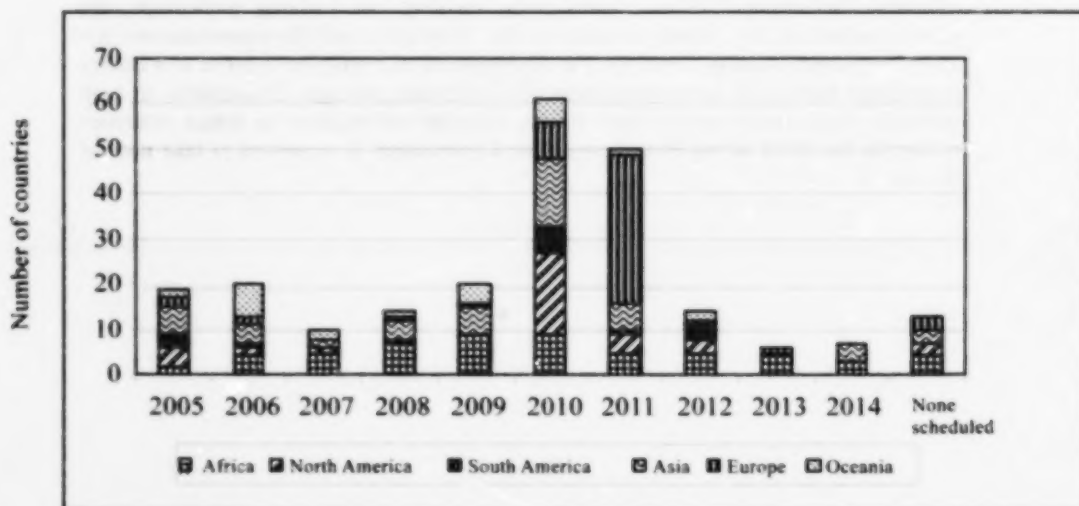
I. Introduction

1. At its thirty-eighth session (see E/2007/24), the Statistical Commission requested the United Nations Statistics Division and other international agencies to increase their technical assistance to national statistical offices in order to strengthen national capacity for the implementation of the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses. In addition, the Commission requested countries to begin implementation of the revised *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses*.

II. Implementation of the 2010 round of population and housing censuses

2. By the end of 2008, 64 countries or areas, representing 21 per cent of the world population, will have undertaken a census. In 2008, a census was successfully conducted in Liberia after 23 years and in the Sudan after 14 years. In addition, in the current round, a census has been successfully conducted in Bhutan after 24 years and in Nigeria and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea after 15 years. Nevertheless, 13 countries or areas, representing less than 2 per cent of the world population have not indicated whether they are going to conduct a census. Although the situation already seems to be better than it was during the previous census round (1995-2004), some concern remains. For example, a few countries, especially in Africa, have postponed their census from 2008 to 2009 owing to budget constraints. The following figure shows the reported census dates by number of countries, regions and census year.

2010 census round dates



III. Activities of the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses

3. Following the publication of the second revision of the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses*, the Division carried out activities aimed at advancing the implementation of the 2010 World Programme. They included the dissemination of the revised census recommendations; the development of international census guidelines; the conduct of an expert group meeting and five training workshops; the development of a website to serve as a census knowledge base; the development of a software package, CensusInfo, to help countries disseminate census data; and the inclusion on the Division website of an interactive database of topics relating to questions asked in national censuses.

A. International census guidelines

4. The second revision of the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses* has been published in print form, and an online version is available on the Division website at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/census3.htm>. The publication has been submitted for translation from English into the other five official languages of the United Nations.

5. The *Handbook On Geographic Information Systems And Digital Mapping*, which was issued for use in the 2000 round of population and housing censuses, has been reviewed and updated to take into account recent technological developments in the geographic information area in terms of not only geospatial technologies (geographical information systems, global positioning systems, remote sensing, Internet mapping, et cetera), but, more broadly, approaches to the use of geospatial applications for statistical exercises in general, and population and housing censuses, in particular. These developments have been reflected in the second revision of the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses*, which was adopted by the Statistical Commission in March 2007. The revised handbook will provide census planners and related personnel with technical guidelines on the contemporary methods, tools and best practices that will enable them to better articulate their needs and deal with census mapping operations more efficiently.

B. Expert group meeting

6. An expert group meeting was held in New York from 7 to 19 April 2008 to review the draft handbook on geographic databases and census mapping. The purpose of the meeting was to critically review the draft handbook in terms of the use of geospatial tools in support of census activities. The draft is a revision of the *Handbook on Geographic Information Systems and Digital Mapping* produced to support the activities of the 2000 World Programme. The handbook provides detailed technical and operational guidelines relating to recent developments in technology, methods and standardization in the area of geographic information and census mapping.

C. Training workshops

7. Seven training workshops were conducted by the Division in 2008, in collaboration with the relevant regional commissions and subregional organizations.

8. A workshop for the Pacific region on international standards, contemporary technologies and regional cooperation was held in Noumea, New Caledonia, from 4 to 8 February 2008. The purpose of the workshop was to present international standards for conducting population and housing censuses, including the revised census recommendations, as well as to highlight the significant capabilities of contemporary technologies and their use in census mapping activities and data capture. It was also designed to provide an opportunity for exploring ways of strengthening regional cooperation in establishing joint ventures during various stages of population and housing censuses in the region.

9. Four workshops were organized on contemporary technologies for data capture and the methodology and practice of data editing. The objective of the workshops was to present international standards for processing population and housing censuses and to highlight the significant additional capabilities of contemporary technologies and their use for census data capture and editing. In addition, the workshops offered participants the opportunity to exchange experiences in census data processing. The workshops were held in:

(a) Doha, from 18 to 22 May 2008, for the countries of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia region;

(b) Dar es Salaam, from 9 to 13 June 2008, for the English-speaking African countries;

(c) Bangkok, from 15 to 19 September 2008, for the Asian countries;

(d) Bamako, from 3 to 7 November 2008, for the French-speaking African countries.

10. Two additional workshops were held, in Santiago, from 24 to 27 November 2008, for the Latin American countries; and in Minsk, from 8 to 12 December 2008, for the countries members of the Commonwealth of Independent States. The purpose of the Santiago workshop was to highlight the significant additional capabilities of geographic information systems and other geospatial technologies in census mapping activities, including preparations for enumeration, enumeration operations, analysis and dissemination of census data, and provide information on how to effectively use the relevant technologies. The objective of the Minsk workshop was to present international standards for conducting population and housing censuses and to highlight the significant capabilities of contemporary technologies and their use in census mapping and data capture.

11. The Division carries out follow-up activities aimed at monitoring the implementation by countries of workshop recommendations. It also sponsors study visits among countries, thereby facilitating the exchange of knowledge and experience of various census activities.

D. Programme website

12. The Division continued work on the website of the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses as part of its activities for the Programme (<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/census2010.htm>). The website provides updated information and news about country activities related to census-taking in the 2010 census round, including national census dates and questionnaires that have been used in various censuses. In addition, the website provides information on census meetings and workshops organized by the Division and other organizations of the United Nations system.

13. One of the important aspects of the website is the census knowledge base that it provides, which serves as a repository of census methodology and documents pertaining to best practices of countries in census-taking. To date, the knowledge base contains more than 300 articles on activities related to census-taking. The Division will soon add an online technical publication on guidelines for reporting census operations and activities.

14. As part of the exchange of information and reporting on census activities, the Division publishes a periodic newsletter, the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme Newsletter, which is available at the website.

15. In addition to working with the regional commissions, the Division continued to work closely with such international agencies as the World Bank, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

E. CensusInfo 2010

16. Work on the development of a software package, CensusInfo 2010, was initiated in 2008 in collaboration with DevInfo, UNICEF and UNFPA, to assist countries in disseminating census results on the website and CD-ROM. In order to make CensusInfo 2010 more compatible with existing data processing and analysis software, including CPro and REDATAM, sample data sets were obtained from countries with a view to developing an interface with such software. A CensusInfo 2010 website has been set up and a prototype developed, which was discussed at a technical review meeting in New York in November 2008.

F. Estimated national needs for the implementation of the 2010 round of population and housing censuses

17. Under the auspices of the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses, and in relation to national plans for the implementation of censuses conducted during the 2010 round, the Division launched an initiative to track, over time, the activities and resource requirements of all the countries of the world in order to better serve the needs of countries intending to conduct censuses in the 2010 round. More specifically, the Division requested from national statistical offices information on projected census dates; planned census activities over the years of the round; overall financial requirements as well as breakdowns by activity and by source; potential donor sources; and technical assistance needs and offerings. More than 130 countries responded. On the basis of the information collected, a paper has been written to present, inter alia, global and regional information on

overall census costs; total and median census costs per capita; percentage national investment in total census budget; and percentage of total budget by census activity. The paper is posted on the knowledge base. <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/censuskb/article.aspx?id=10491&cNode=6S5F1P>.

IV. Future activities

18. A range of census-related activities are planned for 2009, including those listed in paragraphs 19 to 28 below:

Monitoring country activities related to censuses

19. As part of the activities to monitor the implementation of the 2010 round of population and housing censuses, the Division will publish information on the progress made by countries in conducting population and housing censuses. The major goal of the 2010 World Programme is to ensure that all countries and areas conduct a population and housing census at least once during the decade 2005-2014. Consequently, the primary objective of monitoring national census activities is to set up an alert system to identify the status of census-taking in various countries. Information on national census dates will continue to be published on the Division website (<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/census2010.htm>). A new feature in the context of the monitoring of census-taking will be a graphic display on the website showing the proportion of countries conducting a census in the 2010 round. Identifying difficulties that countries may face in implementing the 2010 World Programme will help to ensure proper and timely support during the various phases of census preparation and conduct. The findings will be brought to the attention of the international community in an attempt to generate support and attract donors.

20. As part of the monitoring of the 2010 census round, the Division will also maintain a database indicating the status of implementation of the recommended topics, as described in the second revision of the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses*.

Technical guidelines and handbooks

21. The Division will continue to produce guidelines and technical materials pertaining to the various census phases. Work will continue on the preparation of reference and training materials on topics critical to the 2010 World Programme. The strategy is to focus each year on successive stages of the census process, thereby enabling the Division to update and/or develop guidelines and best practices in a rational way. Materials used in workshops will be refined and adapted to online training materials for use by a wider audience. In this connection, material on census mapping and geographic information systems and census data capture and editing will be posted online.

22. Many countries do not evaluate their censuses for coverage and content error, or do so in a very limited fashion. One reason is the fact that the requisite skills and technical knowledge regarding evaluation methods are limited, specifically with respect to post-enumeration surveys. In recognition of that fact, the Division is drafting technical guidelines that synthesize the critical elements that countries need to take into consideration when planning and conducting a post-enumeration survey. The guidelines will cover, inter alia, the following topics: an overview of the

various methods of evaluating a census (including a post-enumeration survey) and their strengths and weaknesses; sample survey designs; matching rules; dual system estimation; and suggested tabulations. The guidelines will also illustrate the various steps, using best practice examples from countries that have recently conducted a survey.

23. The Division will also collect and make available information on national best practices related to quality assurance for the census. It is anticipated that broad guidelines on quality assurance will be developed on the basis of the material on best practices.

Training workshops

24. In 2009, the Division will focus on training workshops covering quality assurance and census evaluation, including post-enumeration surveys. In addition, the workshops will cover modules of such special topics as measuring economic activity and disability through censuses.

Development of a software package for census information dissemination

25. Work on the development, finalization and dissemination of CensusInfo will continue in 2009. There will be further consultations with countries in order to test the new software package.

Documenting national best practices and alternative census designs

26. Traditional/conventional censuses are still the most popular methodologies for many countries; however, some countries are adopting or planning for new approaches in census-taking, including the rolling census, the virtual census, the register-based census and the re-engineered census. The Division will monitor those new developments and methodologies for elaboration and dissemination on the Division website. Emphasis will be placed on discussing the conditions necessary for such methodologies to yield reliable data, and the prospects for portability to other countries.

Maintenance of the resource centre on the Internet

27. Information on activities posted on the website will be continually updated in 2009 and additional documents will be added to the knowledge base. It is hoped that there will be active participation on the part of member countries in using the available documents and providing information for inclusion on the website.

Technical assistance and study tours

28. Technical assistance missions will be undertaken to provide country-specific support. The aim of the missions will be to strengthen the capacity of countries in conducting censuses. Study tours will also be arranged to foster and enhance South-South cooperation and the sharing of experiences among countries.

V. Recommendation

29. The Commission may wish to take note of the present report.



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Items for information: business registers

Wiesbaden Group on Business Registers

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-ninth session** the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the Commission, for information, the report of the Wiesbaden Group on Business Registers (formerly Round Table on Business Survey Frames). The Commission is requested to take note of the report.

* E/CN.3/2009/1.

** See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2008, Supplement No. 4 (E/2008/24)*, chap. I.A.



Report of the Wiesbaden Group on Business Registers

1. The 21st meeting of the Wiesbaden Group on Business Registers was held from 24 to 27 November 2008 at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which had offered to host the event. This 2008 meeting of the Wiesbaden Group (formerly Round Table on Business Survey Frames), with a long-standing history of achievements, attracted 85 participants from 39 countries and international institutions. It is the sole international forum concerned with analysing and comparing the foundations of statistical systems, reflected also in the title of the 2008 meeting, "The Central Place of Business Register Systems in Response to Globalization Needs". The meeting was organized in seven sessions and a description of each session is provided in the present report. The Chair of the meeting was Mr. Andreas Lindner, OECD.

2. Following a long-standing tradition, the meeting started with country progress reports under Session 1. Some 32 reports were briefly presented, outlining new developments and solutions found. A synopsis of trends and issues will be prepared in 2009. The session was chaired by Mr. Lindner, OECD.

3. Session 2 on the "Need for global, integrated, statistical systems — identifying best practices" was divided into two subsessions: the producer perspective and the user perspective. Session 2a examined the producer's point of view, leading to important key conclusions, such as that new tasks for statistics should begin with (or be accompanied by) feeding additional information into the register system, that the business register is the backbone for business statistics and data combination but running a high quality register requires close cooperation with its statistical users in the statistical institutions, and that globalization forces statisticians to reconsider the appropriate statistical units. The Chair of the session was Mr. Roland Sturm, Germany.

4. Session 2b looked at the same topic from a user perspective. Main problems identified were lack of identity across observation units and the increasing need for more statistics, linking trade and structural business statistics (in particular by size-class). Also the need to expand data collection to services was stated. Linkage problems were the main user concern. This session was chaired by Mr. Lindner, OECD.

5. Session 3, "Costs and benefit of profiling", was chaired by Mr. John Perry, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. After having examined current practice, the session identified issues for future consideration, such as the role of multinational groups, how to manage monitoring dynamic business structures, quality control and the role of information technology and data-sharing needs across countries.

6. Session 4 focused on the latter aspect by looking at "Concepts and methods for information and data sharing". Important conclusions were that the business register system will have to increasingly link to administrative sources and to cooperate more actively with the other government bodies. Owing to their privileged status in terms of access to administrative data, the national statistical institutions have a comparative advantage. Therefore, their role needs to be changed from a mere customer requesting administrative data for statistical purposes to a proactive partner of the administration. Trust in official statistics is a key issue. The Chair of the session was Mr. Norbert Rainer, Austria.

7. "Projects on the improvement of business registers" was the theme of Session 5, chaired by Mr. Claude Macchi, Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat). It made possible the identification of common problems, such as the lack of standardization of business register identifier (ID) and insufficient data sharing across registers. The quality of business registers as a central tool for future statistical design was underlined.

8. Session 6, "New areas of research", was one of the focal topics of the meeting, and hence was composed of three subsessions.

9. Session 6a, "Entrepreneurship indicators, business demography and small and medium enterprises (SMEs)", was chaired by Mr. Hartmut Schroer, Eurostat. Central themes were the measurement and the limitations thereof of high growth enterprises, the harmonized measurement of employment in business demography, and timely release of data. The outlook stressed the need to implement in the European Union/OECD data collection composite indicators on high-growth enterprises and the need to further harmonize employment measures in business demography.

10. "Integrating economic business statistics with trade" was the theme of Session 6b, chaired by Mr. Clancy Barrett, Canada. This linking, carried out by both Eurostat and OECD in a harmonized way (Joint Steering Group), was met with considerable interest from participants and is an innovative, promising exercise for globalization-related analysis. The difficult matching of trade registers and business registers can be considerably facilitated through linkable register frameworks.

11. Session 6c, chaired by Ms. Dominique Francoz, France, was entitled "Measurement of multinationals and enterprise groups". The difficulties in distinguishing headquarters, locations and groups entail delicate decisions for allocation. An important conclusion was that private data sources were inadequate for producing outward foreign affiliates trade in services (FATS) statistics. Work on Enterprise Group Registers in the European Union should be considered a tool for data sharing among States members of the European Union and should also provide a sampling frame for FATS surveys.

12. Session 7, "The needs and solutions in OECD accession countries, Brazil, India, Indonesia, China, South Africa (BIICS) and developing countries", was again divided into three subsessions. Session 7a, "OECD accession countries' experiences and responses", was chaired by Mr. Tim Davis, OECD. Countries could demonstrate successful integration of surveys and ambitious business demography programmes.

13. Session 7b, "BIICS countries' experience and response", chaired by Mr. Lindner, OECD, reported on business register redesign programmes with unique IDs for enterprises and local units, and business register updates and links to census programmes.

14. Session 7c, "Experience and response in developing countries", was chaired by Ms. Vitalija Gaucaite-Wittich, Economic Commission for Europe. It highlighted cooperation projects between national statistical institutions from developed countries and developing countries. These capacity-building programmes aim at helping developing countries to build up viable and comprehensive business register systems. Developing countries were encouraged to harmonize their methodological approaches with international standards.

Conclusion and future plans

15. The meeting provided a rich list of priority actions to be carried forward over the forthcoming years. The Steering Group of the Wiesbaden Group on Business Registers will formulate a multi-year programme. The next Wiesbaden meeting will be held from 27 to 30 September 2010 in Estonia as host country. The terms of reference of the Wiesbaden Group are included in the annex to the present document.

Annex

Terms of reference of the Wiesbaden Group on Business Registers

Background

1. As a result of the 20th meeting in Wiesbaden, the Round Table on Business Survey Frames was renamed "Wiesbaden Group on Business Registers", abbreviated to "Wiesbaden Group". As such it conforms to the convention for naming United Nations city groups. The name change also reflects the changing role of business registers, which are increasingly being seen as the backbone of business statistics and as sources of statistical data in their own right, as well as an increased emphasis for the Group in defining a medium-term work programme.
2. The frequency of the Wiesbaden Group meetings in future will be every two years, starting in 2008.
3. After the conference the Steering Group met on 26 October 2007 (with delegates from Germany, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Australia, France, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Eurostat and the Economic Commission for Europe) and discussed the future of the Wiesbaden Group under the following topics:
 - Purpose and objectives
 - Future workplan
 - Composition and role of the Steering Group
 - Road map and next meetings of the Wiesbaden Group

Purpose and objectives of the Wiesbaden Group on Business Registers

4. The Wiesbaden Group on Business Registers is a United Nations city group. Its traditional purpose is to provide a forum for the exchange of views and experience and the conduct of joint experiments related to the development, maintenance and use of business registers to support survey sampling and other statistical activities related to the production of business statistics. The Wiesbaden Group is an informal body and participation is on a voluntary basis. Participants, however, are expected to contribute at an expert level to the programme of the meetings.
5. The conferences of the Wiesbaden Group are the platform where problems, developments, projects, ideas, concepts and aspects of the construction, maintenance and improvement of business registers are presented and discussed. By this, the Group brings together experts and responsible persons on business registers who could use the experiences of others to promote and bring forward their own ideas for the development of business registers. In particular, the Wiesbaden Group tackles forward-looking aspects and aims to identify new challenges concerning business registers.
6. The Wiesbaden Group recognizes the demand both for information on business register developments and for common guidelines and recommendations on

different issues associated with business registers. There is a range of existing and emerging issues that require expert input to develop and promulgate approaches.

7. Therefore, the Wiesbaden Group intends to produce a range of outputs for different kinds of users, including international bodies, senior managers in national statistical institutions and organizations, in the process of developing business registers. The most visible outputs of the Group besides the conferences are the written papers, which give an in-depth view of current business register developments. All Round-Table papers are available on the websites of the host organization and of Eurostat. Additional value could be gained by circulating the summary reports produced by session conveners, the host organization and/or the Steering Group to specific international bodies.

8. Although its mandate does not emanate from a formal body, the Wiesbaden Group has expressed a desire to increase its emphasis on the provision of guidelines, recommendations and approaches for advancing issues related to business registers. The Wiesbaden Group anticipates, on the basis of its discussions and work programme, making recommendations regarding the consideration and/or adoption of certain practices or global-level standards for business registers to the United Nations Statistical Commission.

9. The Wiesbaden Group recognizes that it has a dual role. On the one hand, many participants are expecting the exchange of experiences and ideas at an advanced level, while on the other hand the Wiesbaden Group is aware that it should be the global forum on business registers and therefore has to respect the needs and interests of countries still developing business registers. The challenge will be to find the right balance.

Workplan and major topics of the next conference(s)

10. The challenges for business registers resulting from globalization have already been highlighted in previous conferences. The next meeting will advance work on further aspects of globalization. The focus for the period until 2010 will be on the following topics.

Profiling (costs and benefits)

11. Profiling is a method to analyse the legal, operational and accounting structure of an enterprise group at national and global levels, in order to establish the statistical units within that group, their links and the most efficient structures for the collection of statistical data. Profiling improves the quality of the business register, its use as a survey frame and source of information. It improves the cooperation with the respondents and the delineation of the statistical units in reality. The main hindrance to profiling is its cost. With a mandate from the Steering Group, Australia and the United Kingdom are setting up a work schedule for the development of a measurement tool on the costs and benefits of profiling.

Concepts and methods for information and data sharing

12. In the economic sphere, fundamental changes have taken place in organizing the process of economic activities more efficiently using different strategies and adapting to new models of national and international operations. Globalization

therefore has an enormous effect on data production and fundamentally changes the requirements for data collection and interpretation. In consequence, business registers have to deal with changing requirements on information to be held and shared because of the globalization process.

Business registers and business statistics in developing countries

13. Back-to-back with the 20th meeting of the Round Table on Business Survey Frames, a special workshop for developing countries was held. The workshop brought together 18 developing as well as developed countries, and discussed the prospects of supporting other nations in their developments in the field of business registers and register-based business statistics. In the future, a session within the official agenda of the conference will deal with the needs of the countries starting up business register and register-based business statistics. The main objective is to provide an extensive information database of best practices and, in the longer term, training materials.

Composition and roles of the Steering Group

14. The Steering Group comprises both national statistical institutions and international organizations. Current members of the group are Australia, Eurostat, France, Germany, OECD, ECE, the United Kingdom and the United States of America (Bureau of Labor Statistics).

15. The Steering Group is chaired by the current host organization. The tasks of the Group are:

- To assist the host of the next meeting on matters relating to the agenda and the contributions.
- To promote and most visibly disseminate the outputs of the Wiesbaden Group.
- To actively engage the Statistical Commission and other senior management forums to promote the work of the Wiesbaden Group and seek their inputs regarding future activities.
- To develop links with other relevant international bodies, for example, the World Bank, to ensure support for attendance by developing countries.
- To ensure coordination with meetings on related topics, for example the Joint Meeting of ECE or others.

Schedule/road map

2009: Joint ECE/OECD/Eurostat seminar on business registers

2010: Meeting of the Wiesbaden Group on Business Registers

2010: Evaluation and revision of the terms of reference



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Item 4 (c) of the provisional agenda*

**Items for information: information and communications
technology statistics**

Report of the Partnership on Measuring Information and Communication Technologies for Development: information and communications technology statistics

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-ninth session,** the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report on information and communications technology statistics of the Partnership on Measuring Information and Communication Technologies for Development. The Commission is requested to take note of the report and the revised core list of information and communications technology indicators contained herein.

* E/CN.3/2009/1.

** See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2008, Supplement No. 4 (E/2008/24)*.



Report of the Partnership on Measuring Information and Communication Technologies for Development

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I. Background

1. At its thirty-sixth session, the Commission considered the first report of the Partnership on Measuring Information and Communication Technologies for Development,¹ on the status of information and communications technology (ICT) statistics globally (see E/CN.3/2005/23). That report introduced the Partnership and its main objectives and described efforts made by the Partnership to harmonize ICT statistics internationally. The Commission took note of the report.

2. At its thirty-eighth session, the Commission considered the second report of the Partnership, which described progress made by the Partnership since the thirty-sixth session, in particular the development of a core list of ICT indicators, as a basis for the collection of internationally comparable ICT statistics (see E/CN.3/2007/5). The Commission endorsed the core list of ICT indicators, congratulated the Partnership for its work and encouraged countries to use the core list in their data collection programmes.² The Commission further recognized that ICT is a rapidly evolving area and encouraged the Partnership to continue work to improve and update the list of indicators, especially in view of measuring the use of ICT in education and in government, the contribution of ICT to economic growth and social development and barriers to the use of ICT. The Commission also encouraged the Partnership to assist countries in their capacity-building efforts for the collection of data on ICT indicators.

3. The present report provides an overview of progress made by the Partnership since the thirty-eighth session of the Commission and presents a revised core list of ICT indicators, including new indicators on measuring ICT in education.

II. Progress made by the Partnership on Measuring Information and Communication Technologies for Development

4. During 2007 and 2008, the members of the Partnership worked to accomplish Partnership objectives and respond to Commission recommendations. In particular, Partnership members were active in assisting developing countries in collecting ICT data based on internationally agreed standards, compiling and disseminating indicators globally and regionally, revising and expanding the core list of indicators and examining new ICT measurement issues, such as measuring the economic and social impact of ICT. Annex I to the present report contains a summary of the main activities carried out by the Partnership during 2007 and 2008.

¹ The following are members of the Partnership: International Telecommunication Union; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development; United Nations Conference on Trade and Development; UNESCO Institute for Statistics; Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean; Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia; Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific; Economic Commission for Africa; Eurostat; and the World Bank.

² See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2007, Supplement No. 4 (E/2007/24)*.

A. Methodological work

5. The Partnership has continued to develop standards on ICT statistics. The core list of ICT indicators has been further revised (see sect. III below). The Partnership Task Group on Education (led by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics) held wide consultations on a set of education indicators to be included in the core list of the Partnership (see sect. III below). The Task Group on e-Government (led by the Economic Commission for Africa) met in May 2008 to discuss progress on work to measure ICT in government and the preparation of a draft list of indicators for consultation with all countries.

6. Following repeated calls from policymakers for data on the social and economic impact of ICT, the Partnership decided to establish a new Task Group on Impacts. Led by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which has been spearheading international work on measuring the economic impact of ICT, the Task Group aims at examining how ICT impacts can be measured and what the data requirements are. The goal is to provide countries with a set of statistical and analytical tools to carry out their own assessment of ICT impact.

B. Capacity-building

7. The Task Group on Capacity-building (led by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)) has established a work programme on technical assistance and capacity-building for developing economies, which is being carried out by individual members of the Partnership. It includes the development and delivery of training courses by UNCTAD and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), country-level advisory missions, regional and national workshops organized by different members and the preparation of practical guidebooks, such as the OECD guide to the information society, the UNCTAD *Manual for the Production of Statistics on the Information Economy* and the ITU ICT household statistics manual (forthcoming in early 2009).

C. Data collection and dissemination

8. A comprehensive statistical report, *The Global Information Society: a Statistical View*, was prepared and issued by the Partnership in May 2008; it included a presentation of ICT indicators available globally and an assessment of progress in measuring the information society and data gaps that remain. The publication was launched during the Partnership's 2008 global event on measuring the information society, which was held from 27 to 29 May 2008 in Geneva.

9. The Task Group on Database Development (led by the World Bank) agreed to include the core indicators collected by different members of the Partnership in the newly established United Nations data portal maintained by the United Nations Statistics Division. The data (including metadata) were submitted to the Division in October 2008.

D. Coordination and governance

10. A memorandum of understanding was signed by the members of the Partnership in 2007, with the objective of further strengthening the institutional commitment of the members and of providing guidelines for prospective members.

11. During a meeting of the Partnership on 30 May 2008, the members of the Steering Committee (ITU, UNCTAD, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean) were re-elected for the term 2008-2010.

III. Revisions to, and extension of, the core list of information and communications technology indicators

12. The first version of the core list of ICT indicators was developed by the Partnership during 2004-2005, through an extensive consultation process with statistical offices, ICT policymakers and national and international experts. The list, contained in the Partnership report "Core ICT indicators", was released at the end of 2005 and endorsed in 2007 by the Commission at its thirty-eighth session. The list covered indicators on ICT infrastructure and access; access to and use of ICT by households and individuals; ICT use by businesses; the ICT sector; and trade in ICT goods.

13. From the beginning, the core list was considered to be a reference point that would be subject to periodic review. As countries gain experience with the collection of ICT statistics and as technologies and policy needs evolve, indicators may be modified, removed or added.

14. The current proposals for revisions are based on information from a number of sources, including:

(a) Feedback received from users in statistical meetings, seminars and training workshops, as well as from consultations on the UNCTAD *Manual for the Production of Statistics on the Information Economy*;

(b) Revisions made in the ITU *Telecommunication Indicators Handbook* following the fifth and sixth World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators meetings of ITU (held in 2006 and 2007);

(c) Revisions made to the Eurostat ICT model questionnaires;

(d) Changes to other international standards and closer compliance with those standards (particularly those of the Statistics Division and the International Labour Organization).

15. As a result, the Partnership submitted proposed revisions at its 2008 global event. A draft document was subsequently prepared and circulated for comments to all countries and was posted on the global event website (available from http://new.unctad.org/templates/Event_888.aspx). The revised core list reflects the comments received on the draft document.

16. Revisions to the existing core list include the following:

(a) Removal of the distinction between basic and extended core indicators and deletion of some indicators;

(b) Changes in definitions of terms used in the indicators to reflect changes in international standards;

(c) Modifications to the indicator response categories to reflect technological and ICT usage changes;

(d) Revisions to collection scope and classificatory variables (e.g., business size; age ranges) to reflect changes in international standards.

17. An important consideration, when revising the indicator concepts and definitions, has been how best to retain the time series value of existing data. The Partnership considers that most of the revisions made will have little impact on ongoing time series.

18. An important improvement to the 2005 core list has been the addition of eight new indicators on measuring ICT in education. Those indicators were developed by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics over several years and have been subject to extensive testing and consultation processes, including an extensive review through many international surveys. The proposed selection reflects a minimum realistic list of indicators that are policy-relevant and comparable cross-nationally and that a majority of countries could easily produce without confronting a significant data collection burden. Noting the relatively low level of ICT policy implementation in many developing countries that are facing the most acute educational challenges, the initial list will adequately help to monitor internationally the breadth and progress of countries using ICT for education service delivery. The proposed set of indicators of ICT in education offers a balanced mix of metrics covering both newer technologies (computers and the Internet) and older technologies (radio or television-based education), the latter being still perceived as most affordable for developing countries in their need for rapid expansion of teaching and learning opportunities.

19. Annex II to the present report contains a summary of the revised and extended core list of ICT indicators. A detailed description of the revisions is contained in a background document on revisions and additions to the core list of ICT indicators, prepared by the Partnership for the fortieth session of the Commission.

IV. Conclusions and future work

20. During the past few years, a growing number of developing countries have started to measure information society developments. In that context, the members of the Partnership have provided valuable guidance and the core list has become a common reference for national statistics offices in developing countries.

21. The members of the Partnership will continue to work together to improve internationally comparable ICT statistics globally, in particular in developing countries. Following the recommendations made by the Commission at its thirty-eighth session, as well as by the participants in the 2008 global event, future work will focus on the following:

(a) Continuing to revise the core list of indicators, including developing indicators on measuring e-government. The Task Group on e-Government (led by ECA) is working on developing proposals on how to measure ICT use in government;

(b) Expanding the work on measuring ICT impact. A new Task Group on Impacts (led by OECD) has been created, which will develop tools to help measure the economic and social impacts of ICT;

(c) Continuing and expanding work to assist developing countries in developing their work on ICT statistics, through regional and national seminars and training workshops, as well as technical advice to countries. The manuals developed by UNCTAD and ITU on measuring business and household ICT statistics and their related training courses, will be useful tools in this effort;

(d) Continuing to raise political awareness of the importance of ICT measurement by improving Partnership communication tools and participating actively in international efforts to measure progress in the achievement of the World Summit on the Information Society targets and the Millennium Development Goals.

Annex I

**Summary of the main activities of the Partnership on
Measuring Information and Communication Technologies
for Development, 2007-2008**

<i>Date</i>	<i>Activity</i>
January 2007	UNCTAD training course on applying econometric methods to ICT data analysis for Thai National Statistical Office, Bangkok
February 2007	Joint Meeting of ESCWA, UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the Knowledge Management Branch/Division for Public Administration and Development Management/Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Cabinet Information and Decision Support Center on the theme "ICT indicators adoption and data collection: ICT indicators in education and e-government", Cairo
March 2007	UNCTAD/ECA/ITU regional workshop on information society measurement in Africa, Addis Ababa
March-July 2007	Memorandum of understanding signed by all 10 Partnership members
April 2007	Eleventh meeting of the OECD working party on indicators for the information society, Paris
June 2007	Joint workshop of ESCWA, UNCTAD, OECD, ITU Arab Regional Office, League of Arab States and Egyptian Ministry of Communications and Information Technology on the theme "Capacity-building workshop on information society measurements: household and business surveys", Cairo
July 2007	"Guidelines for ICT indicators measurement", a technical study in Arabic based on the work of the Partnership and inputs from national statistical offices, produced by ESCWA, in collaboration with the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics
October/November 2007	ITU training on building an ICT indicators database for national statistical offices and the telecommunication regulatory authority of Indonesia, Jakarta
November 2007	ITU, ESCAP and Asia-Pacific Telecommunity workshop on the theme "Capacity-building workshop on information society statistics: infrastructure and household indicators", Bangkok
November 2007	Release of the first version of UNCTAD <i>Manual for the Production of Statistics on the Information Economy</i>
December 2007	Arabic version of "Core ICT indicators" issued by ESCWA, in collaboration with the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics

Date	Activity
December 2007	UNCTAD training course on the production of statistics for the information economy, delivered in Colombia in cooperation with the Centro Andino de Altos Estudios, for the member countries of the Andean Community and of ECLAC
December 2007	Sixth ITU World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Meeting, Geneva
December 2007	UNESCO Institute for Statistics/ECA consultative workshop on core ICT in education indicators, Addis Ababa
February 2008	Training course on the production of statistics for the information economy for Asia, Incheon, Republic of Korea. The course was organized by UNCTAD and hosted by the ESCAP Asia and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communications Technology for Development, in collaboration with the United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and Pacific
February 2008	ECLAC regional workshop on measuring the information society, held in San Salvador, with the support of UNCTAD, the national statistical offices and the Ministry of Economics
March 2008	Latin American workshop on indicators of ICT in education organized by the Observatory for the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean and ECLAC, in collaboration with the Office of Statistics and the Secretariat of Education, Santo Domingo
April 2008	Twelfth meeting of the OECD Working Party on Indicators for the Information Society, Paris
May 2008	Release of the Partnership of a global stock-taking publication on ICT indicators, <i>The Global Information Society: A Statistical View</i>
May 2008	Joint UNCTAD-United Nations Statistical Division expert group meeting on the UNCTAD <i>Manual for the Production of Statistics on the Information Economy</i>
May 2008	Partnership 2008 global event on measuring the information society, Geneva; the event was organized as part of the World Summit on the Information Society cluster events, held from 19 to 30 May 2008 in Geneva
May 2008	Meeting of the Partnership members and election of the Partnership Steering Committee for the term 2008-2010
June 2008	UNCTAD advisory mission to Nepal to assist the National Bureau of Statistics in the development and planning of ICT statistical collections
October 2008	UNESCO Institute for Statistics francophone Africa regional education statistics workshop: preliminary review of the initial draft questionnaire items for the 2009 ICT in education pilot survey, Abidjan
January 2009	ITU releases the first version of its manual on ICT household statistics

Date	Activity
January 2009	Capacity-building workshop on information society measurements for Caribbean countries, organized by ECLAC, ITU and UNCTAD and hosted by the Ministry of Public Administration of Trinidad and Tobago
February 2009	Release of revised version of UNCTAD <i>Manual for the Production of Statistics on the Information Economy</i>

Abbreviations: ECA: Economic Commission for Africa; ECLAC: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean; ESCAP: Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific; ESCWA: Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia; ICT: information and communications technology; ITU: International Telecommunication Union; OECD: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development; UNCTAD: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development; UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Annex II

Revised and extended core list of information and communications technology indicators^a

Core indicators on information and communications technology infrastructure and access

- A1 Fixed telephone lines per 100 inhabitants
- A2 Mobile cellular telephone subscribers per 100 inhabitants
- A3 Fixed Internet subscribers per 100 inhabitants
- A4 Fixed broadband Internet subscribers per 100 inhabitants
- A5 Mobile broadband subscribers per 100 inhabitants
- A6 International Internet bandwidth per inhabitant (bits/second/inhabitant)
- A7 Percentage of population covered by a mobile cellular telephone network
- A8 Fixed broadband Internet access tariffs per month, in United States dollars, and as a percentage of monthly per capita income
- A9 Mobile cellular prepaid tariffs per month, in United States dollars, and as a percentage of monthly per capita income
- A10 Percentage of localities with public Internet access centres by number of inhabitants

Core indicators on access to, and use of, information and communications technology by households and individuals

- HH1 Proportion of households with a radio
- HH2 Proportion of households with a television
- HH3 Proportion of households with a telephone
 - Fixed telephone only
 - Mobile cellular telephone only
 - Both a fixed and a mobile cellular telephone
- HH4 Proportion of households with a computer
- HH5 Proportion of individuals who used a computer (from any location) in the last 12 months
- HH6 Proportion of households with Internet access at home
- HH7 Proportion of individuals who used the Internet (from any location) in the last 12 months
- HH8 Location of individual use of the Internet in the last 12 months
 - Home

- Work
 - Place of education
 - Another person's home
 - Community Internet access facility (specific denomination depends on national practices)
 - Commercial Internet access facility (specific denomination depends on national practices)
 - Any place via a mobile cellular phone
 - Any place via other mobile access devices
- HH9** Internet activities undertaken by individuals in the last 12 months (from any location)
- Getting information about goods or services
 - Getting information related to health or health services
 - Getting information from general government organizations
 - Interacting with general government organizations
 - Sending or receiving e-mail
 - Telephoning over the Internet/Voice over Internet Protocol
 - Posting information or instant messaging
 - Purchasing or ordering goods or services
 - Internet banking
 - Education or learning activities
 - Playing or downloading videogames or computer games
 - Downloading movies, images, music; watching television or video; or listening to radio or music
 - Downloading software
 - Reading or downloading online newspapers or magazines, electronic books
- HH10** Proportion of individuals with use of a mobile cellular telephone
- HH11** Proportion of households with access to the Internet by type of access
- Narrowband
 - Fixed broadband
 - Mobile broadband
- HH12** Frequency of individual use of the Internet in the last 12 months (from any location)
- at least once a day
 - at least once a week but not every day
 - less than once a week

Reference indicator

HHR1 Proportion of households with electricity

**Core indicators on use of information and communications technology
by businesses**

- B1 Proportion of businesses using computers
- B2 Proportion of persons employed routinely using computers
- B3 Proportion of businesses using the Internet
- B4 Proportion of persons employed routinely using the Internet
- B5 Proportion of businesses with a website
- B6 Proportion of businesses with an Intranet
- B7 Proportion of businesses receiving orders over the Internet
- B8 Proportion of businesses placing orders over the Internet
- B9 Proportion of businesses using the Internet by type of access
 - Narrowband
 - Fixed broadband
 - Mobile broadband
- B10 Proportion of businesses with a local area network
- B11 Proportion of businesses with an extranet
- B12 Proportion of businesses using the Internet by type of activity
 - Sending or receiving e-mail
 - Telephoning over the Internet/Voice over Internet Protocol or using videoconferencing
 - Use of instant messaging, bulletin boards
 - Getting information about goods or services
 - Getting information from general government organizations
 - Interacting with general government organizations
 - Internet banking
 - Accessing other financial services
 - Providing customer services
 - Delivering products online
 - Internal or external recruitment
 - Staff training

Core indicators on the information and communications technology sector and trade in information and communications technology goods

- ICT1 Proportion of total business sector workforce involved in the ICT sector (expressed as a percentage)
- ICT2 ICT sector share of gross value added (expressed as a percentage of total business sector gross value added)
- ICT3 ICT goods imports as a percentage of total imports
- ICT4 ICT goods exports as a percentage of total exports

Core indicators on information and communications technology in education

- ED1 Proportion of schools with a radio used for educational purposes (for ISCED levels 1 to 3)
- ED2 Proportion of schools with a TV used for educational purposes (for ISCED levels 1 to 3)
- ED3 Proportion of schools with a telephone communication facility (for ISCED levels 1 to 3)
- ED4 Student-to-computer ratio (for ISCED levels 1 to 3)
- ED5 Proportion of schools with Internet access, by type (for ISCED levels 1 to 3)
- Fixed narrowband
 - Fixed broadband
 - Both fixed narrowband and broadband
- ED6 Proportion of students who have access to the Internet at school (for ISCED levels 1 to 3)
- ED7 Proportion of students enrolled by gender at the tertiary level in ICT-related fields (for ISCED levels 5 and 6)
- ED8 Proportion of ICT-qualified teachers in primary and secondary schools

Reference indicator

- EDR1 Proportion of schools with electricity (for ISCED levels 1 to 3)^b

Abbreviations: ICT: information and communications technology; ISCED: International Standard Classification of Education.

^a For a detailed elaboration on the revisions made to the previous core list, please see report on revision and additions to the core list of ICT indicators, prepared by the Partnership on Measuring Information and Communications Technologies for Development as a background document for the fortieth session of the Statistical Commission.

^b Since electricity is not specifically an information and communications technology commodity but an important prerequisite for using many information and communications technologies, it is not included in the core list, but is included as a reference indicator. International studies reviewed by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics revealed that the lack of electricity is such a significant barrier in many developing economies that monitoring trends of its provision is as relevant as monitoring the supply and use of information and communications technology.



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Items for information: price statistics

Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-ninth session,** the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the Commission, for information, the report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics. The Commission is requested to take note of the report.

* E/CN.3/2009/1.

** See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2008, Supplement No. 4 (E/2008/24)*, chap. I.B.



Report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics

Background and purpose of the Working Group

1. The mission of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics is to coordinate international work on price statistics and support the development and implementation of internationally accepted standards and methods.
2. The Intersecretariat Working Group was established in 1998. The original terms of reference focused on the development of international manuals on consumer price indices (CPIs), producer price indices (PPIs) and export and import price indices. As a result, the *Consumer Price Index Manual: Theory and Practice* and the *Producer Price Index Manual: Theory and Practice* were published in 2004.
3. The terms of reference were revised in 2005. The revised terms of reference (see annex) refer to the further development of the consumer price index and producer price index manuals and their implementation, including reviewing the electronic versions of the manuals, and to the development of international manuals for other price statistics, in particular export and import price indices and house price indices. The revised terms of reference also refer to the coordination of international work on price indices in order to avoid duplication of efforts.

Organization of the Working Group

4. The Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics consists of institutional representatives from the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat) and the World Bank. The Working Group is open and invites experts from statistical offices and academia to participate in its meetings. In March 2007 ECE took over the rotating chair of the Group from IMF.
5. The Working Group aims to meet in conjunction with international meetings on price statistics. In between, issues are reviewed by means of electronic discussions. The Group held its previous meeting on 7 May 2008 in Geneva, in conjunction with the joint ECE/ILO meeting on Consumer Price Indices, held on 8 and 9 May 2008. The next meeting is scheduled to take place in Neuchâtel, Switzerland, on 26 May 2009, in conjunction with the meeting of the Ottawa Group on Price Indexes to be held from 27 to 29 May 2009.

Activities since the thirty-eighth session of the Statistical Commission in 2007

6. A previous report on the work of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics, including the revised terms of reference, was submitted by IMF to the Statistical Commission for its thirty-eighth session in 2007 (E/CN.3/2007/23). Since then, the following activities can be reported.
7. In October 2007, the *CPI Manual* was made available in Russian both online from the IMF website and in hard copy, in addition to the existing Spanish- and French-language versions. A Japanese-language version of the Manual in hard copy has been available since 2005. Arabic- and Chinese-language versions are expected to be made available online and in hard copy by late 2008/early 2009. The English

online version of the *CPI Manual* has been revised and the ILO web page contains the original version, errata and the latest corrected version (www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/guides/cpi/index.htm). The non-English versions have also benefited from the revision.

8. The *PPI Manual* is available in English only in hard copy and online from the IMF web page (www.imf.org/external/np/sta/tegpipi/index.htm). Spanish and French versions are expected to be published by IMF in 2008.
9. An *Export and Import Price Index (XMPI) Manual* is being drafted under the lead of IMF. The Manual will follow the same structure as that of the *PPI Manual*. Chapters that are new to the *PPI Manual* discuss unit value indices, transfer prices and terms of trade indices, and some chapters have been extended to be consistent with the *System of National Accounts, 2008* (2008 SNA). Draft chapters of the *XMPI Manual* are available from www.imf.org/external/np/sta/tegeipi/index.htm. A revised manuscript is currently being copy-edited by IMF and is expected to be published early in 2009. Before publication the Manual will need the approval of the Working Group.
10. In 2007, work began to produce the *Supplementary Handbook: Practical Guide to Compiling Consumer Price Indices*. It will focus on practical and implementation issues relevant to the compilation of the CPI in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. The work is led by the Office for National Statistics of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and funded by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development. The *Handbook* is expected to be published in 2009 and will be made available online and in hard copy. The Working Group will follow procedures similar to those for the CPI and PPI Manuals to ensure the quality and consistency of the *Handbook*.
11. A joint ECE/ILO meeting on consumer price indices for countries with economies in transition was organized on 7 May 2008 in Geneva for presentation and discussion of the draft chapters of the *Handbook* and the corresponding chapters in the *CPI Manual*. During the meeting, which was attended by 50 price statisticians from national statistical offices, points and suggestions were made that will be taken into account in the further drafting of the *Handbook*. The proceedings of the meeting and draft chapters of the *Handbook* are available at www.unece.org/stats/documents/2008.05.cpi2.htm. Draft chapters of the *Handbook* are also to be presented in other forums, including a regional price statistics course organized by IMF in Singapore in October 2008.
12. Eurostat has agreed to lead the work on a *Handbook on House Price Indices*. The scope of the handbook, a timetable, arrangements for discussing and assuring the quality of the work and a draft outline of the content of the handbook have been agreed with the Working Group. Eurostat expects to contract an expert or a team of experts to carry out the main work on the handbook. The aim is to have the contract in place late in 2008. The draft handbook should be delivered by the contractor by autumn of 2010. The handbook should therefore be ready for approval by the Working Group around the end of 2010. A Steering Group will be established to oversee the project.
13. The joint ECE/ILO Meeting on Consumer Price Indices was held on 8 and 9 May 2008 in Geneva. It was attended by 100 participants from national statistical offices in Europe, Asia, Africa, the Middle East and North and South America. The

main themes discussed were "Collection and processing of price data" and "Integration of price indices". The participants recommended that a joint ECE/ILO meeting on CPIs in 2010 should be included in the programme of work of the Conference of European Statisticians, subject to the approval of the Conference and its Bureau. The following topics were suggested for possible inclusion in the agenda: House price indices; User relations and how to meet user needs; Quality adjustment for services in CPIs and PPIs; CPI and globalization; and the System of price indices (CPI, PPI, PPP, XMPI and sectoral price indices). The report and proceedings of the meeting are available from the ECE website, www.unece.org/stats/documents/2008.05.cpi.htm.

14. The Working Group aims to improve the coordination of international work on price statistics and avoid duplication of efforts. Hence, since 2007 it has been agreed to interchange the joint ECE/ILO CPI meetings and the meetings of the Ottawa Group on Price Indexes to make the scheduling of work easier and facilitate better integration of the two forums. To further strengthen the coordination of work, mutual representation has been established between the Organizing Committee of the Joint CPI meeting, the Steering Group of the Ottawa Group and the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics. The Working Group will strengthen further the coordination of the Ottawa Group and the joint ECE/ILO meetings to be held in 2009 and 2010.

More information

15. The terms of reference of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics, reports of meetings, a list of members and previous reports to the Statistical Commission are available on the ILO website, www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/guides/cpi/index.htm. The terms of reference of the Working Group are also included in the annex to the present report.

Annex

Terms of reference and functioning of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics

Mission

1. The mission of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics is to develop and document best practice guidelines on concepts and methods of price statistics and indicators consistent with the established international standards on the subject and to encourage their use. Price statistics and indicators include consumer price indices, producer price indices, export-import price indices, real estate price indices and such other price statistics and indicators as are required, preferably compatible with the System of National Accounts, 1993 and the updates thereto.

Objectives

2. The objectives of the Working Group are:

(a) To develop and implement the *Consumer Price Index Manual: Theory and Practice* (International Labour Organization (ILO), Geneva, 2004) and the *Producer Price Index Manual: Theory and Practice* (International Monetary Fund (IMF), Washington, D.C., 2004). The work includes periodic updates of the electronic versions of the manuals available on the ILO and IMF websites;

(b) To arrange for the establishment of standards and manuals for other price statistics, in particular, export-import price indices and real estate price indices;

(c) To coordinate the work of international organizations in implementing the best practices contained in the price index manuals, in sharing information on training and technical assistance and in using resources efficiently to avoid duplication of efforts;

(d) To assist in the development of a framework for price statistics to explain the links between various price indices and between price indices and other relevant economic and labour statistics.

Composition

3. The Working Group currently comprises the following organizations:

- (a) Economic Commission for Europe (ECE);
- (b) International Labour Organization (ILO);
- (c) International Monetary Fund (IMF);
- (d) Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD);
- (e) Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat);
- (f) World Bank.

4. The Working Group is open to all interested and committed organizations, chairs of advisory groups on price index manuals and experts from national statistical offices, academia and international organizations. The Working Group will invite these interested parties to participate in its work programme.

5. The International Labour Organization initially provided the secretariat of the Working Group and was succeeded by the International Monetary Fund in April 2004. IMF was succeeded by the Economic Commission for Europe in March 2007.

External linkages

6. The activities of the Working Group are expected to receive wider exposure through discussion at relevant regional meetings and regular communication with international experts and groups using electronic media such as the Internet.

7. The work of the Working Group will relate to, draw from and capitalize on the work of such technical groups as the Ottawa Group on Price Indexes and the Voorburg Group on Services Statistics, and will complement that of regional and international organizations.

Immediate output

8. The immediate output of the Working Group will consist of the development and update of consumer price index and producer price index manuals, which will take into account:

(a) The recent emergence of economies in transition and movements towards free-market economies in many developing countries;

(b) The collapse of financial markets in many newly emerging and independent countries;

(c) Rapid technological improvements affecting the cost and quality of goods and services and, consequently, their relative prices, and changes in consumer demand and producer supply.

9. The manuals will continue:

(a) To provide an introduction to the theory of indices;

(b) To address both conceptual and operational issues such as sampling, collection methodology, compilation, organization and computation and dissemination of data;

(c) To be intended for use by both developed and developing countries;

(d) To be suitable for training and advisory missions.

Main activities

10. The Working Group will be responsible for the coordination and overall management of the work to update the existing manuals and for the development and approval of new manuals. An advisory group will be established to advise the Working Group on updates to the consumer price index and producer price index manuals. Technical expert groups will be established to advise on the development of the export-import price index and real estate price index manuals. The teams of experts, working in parallel, will exist solely for the update and production of the manuals. Consultants from the members of the advisory group, the technical expert groups, the Working Group, the Ottawa Group and the Voorburg Group, as well as other recognized experts in price measurement from countries not represented in the Ottawa and Voorburg Groups, will be appointed to prepare specific sections of the

manuals on the issues identified by the Working Group. The exact form of authorship, however, will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

11. The Working Group will facilitate the sharing of information among member organizations about training plans and materials, technical assistance to countries on price indices and other activities the organizations undertake to implement the price index manuals.

12. Meetings of the Working Group will take place, as far as possible, at the same time as related scheduled meetings such as the ECE expert meeting on consumer price indices, the Ottawa and Voorburg Group meetings and the ILO/ECE meeting on consumer prices. In addition, the Working Group will conduct virtual meetings, using e-mail correspondence or teleconferencing as needed between face-to-face meetings to discuss issues and activities.

13. Proposals, outlines and draft material will be widely circulated through electronic and other media for comments and suggestions to ensure that all regional concerns are adequately addressed. Relevant organizations such as the regional commissions, the Ottawa Group and the Voorburg Group will also be encouraged to discuss them at their regular meetings.

Finances

14. Organizations participating in the Working Group are expected to meet their own direct expenses. In addition, organizations are expected to contribute to financing other related costs of the Working Group, including the development of the manuals and the hiring of experts.